

LOCAL WEEKLY REPORT

June 4 – June 8, 2012

MIAMI- DADE LEAGUE OF CITIES (MDCLC)

The MDCLC's monthly Board of Directors meeting was held on Thursday evening at the Melreese Country Club in the City of Miami. Miami-Dade County was represented by Commissioners Jose "Pepe" Diaz, who led the Pledge of Allegiance as the meeting commenced, and Lynda Bell. The office of Board of County Commission Chairman Joe Martinez was also represented by staff, as well as OIA.

This month's meeting was brief and included the following:

Town of Miami Lakes Councilman Tim Daubert gave a brief report on the Citizen's Oversight Committee; MDCLC President and Hialeah Councilman Luis Gonzalez gave an update on the Miami-Dade County Charter Review Task Force; City of West Miami Manager Yolanda Aguilar reported on the status of the PTP interlocal agreements working group.

City of Sweetwater Mayor Manuel Marono gave a presentation on synthetic drugs and spoke out on its dangers. He explained how banning the substances in his city has eliminated them from store shelves and he urged all municipalities to take similar measures.

The ordinance adopted by the City of Sweetwater is as follows:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF SWEETWATER, FLORIDA PROHIBITING THE SALE AND DISPLAY OF LOOSE, LEAFY OR GRANULAR INCENSE PRODUCTS; PROVIDING FOR DEFINITIONS; PROVIDING FOR PENALTIES; PROVIDING FOR SEIZURE; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION; PROVIDING FOR EFFECTIVE DATE.

For informal purposes the following was distributed: FPL letter to Village of Pinecrest Mayor Lerner regarding the facts about the company's rate request; Response by Bill Garner regarding FPL letter to Mayor Lerner; Village of Pinecrest resolution regarding FPL proposed base rate; and Florida Public Service Commission Bulletin including Service Hearings (For a copy of the aforementioned documents, please contact OIA).

The Village of Pinecrest resolution regarding FPL proposed base rate reads as follows:

A RESOLUTION OF THE VILLAGE OF PINECREST, FLORIDA, AUTHORIZING SPECIAL COUNSEL TO INTERVENE IN THE FPL PROPOSED BASE RATE CASE BEFORE THE FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Announcements: There will be no Board of Directors meeting in July. The next scheduled meeting is Thursday, August 2.

MIAMI

The City of Miami continues the process of redrawing its commission maps. It has been reported that discussions have transpired regarding moving the Upper East side out of District 2 (an affluent commission district) to become part of District 5 (a struggling urban community). District 2 Commissioner Marc Sarnoff has to lose about 16,000 residents during the redistricting process. District 5 Commissioner Michelle Spence-Jones needs to pick about the same number.

According to City Attorney Julie Bru, the new district maps were supposed to have been created by August 2011 and brought before the commission in March. However, the process was held up in part because Miami is challenging the latest Census figures. While the challenge remains unresolved, redistricting is moving forward.

The city has hired Miguel De Grandy as its redistricting consultant and he will address the commission at the end of the month. The goal is to even out the population to approximately 80,000 in each of the five districts while ensuring minority representation.

Currently Districts 1, 3 and 4 each have around 80,000 residents. But District 2 has 96,286 because of growth in Brickell and downtown Miami; and the land-locked District 5 has decreased to 67,059.

Spence-Jones said that she is open to discussing all of the options. Spence-Jones also indicated that she is not concerned that expanding her district would dilute the power of her minority base.

MIAMI BEACH

On Wednesday, the Miami Beach City Commission voted unanimously to appoint the city's budget director as interim city manager. Kathie Brooks, 52, will commence her new responsibilities on July 8th, the official day of Jorge Gonzalez's departure.

Brooks must negotiate a contract with the city's attorney's office and will be ratified as interim manager on July 18. She expects to return to her post as budget director when a

permanent manger is hired. Additionally on Wednesday, commissioners voted to hire and pay headhunter Bob Murray & Associates up to \$25,000 to recruit applicants.

In the meantime, Gonzalez is in negotiations with the city regarding his severance pay. His contract guarantees one year's compensation in the event of a forced resignation. Nevertheless, commissioners agreed to keep Gonzalez on the employee payroll following his resignation, so that he can continue to receive health coverage. Gonzalez is currently owed up to \$168,000 in accrued sick, vacation and planning time (which will be paid in biweekly checks).

Brooks will be tasked with running the city as well as heading an approximately \$1 billion convention center redevelopment project, negotiating new contracts with the city's five unions and creating the city's 2013 budget, which contains a \$5.5 million shortfall, according to estimates.

Additionally, Commissioners voted to spend up to \$150,000 for an audit of regulatory agencies and to send a police officer to work full time with the FBI's Miami Area Corruption Task Force. However, for the second time, the city has declined to approve a deal to have the Miami-Dade Ethics Commission provide training for employees and to have the Miami-Dade Office of the Inspector General investigate waste and corruption.

In other business, the city commission voted 6-1 in favor of a law requiring a recycling program for any residential building of more than eight units. The same requirement already exists in Miami-Dade but the resources for enforcement are scarce and have consequently been lax. The city's enforcement will be based on complaints. Fines will range from \$500 for a first offense to \$2,500 for more than four violations. Commissioners also agreed to issue warning during the first six months of outreach regarding the new requirement. They will revisit the measure for discussion in July 2013, prior to moving forward with violations.

CORAL GABLES

On Wednesday, after a contentious day of arguments, the city commission decided to place the final decision, on the overnight parking of pick-up trucks, on the residents through referendum.

Currently, the city has a decade's old ordinance in place that prohibits the overnight parking of pick-up trucks on city streets, including private driveways. At the commission's request, the Planning and Zoning Board studied the law and recommended several changes, including allowing non-commercial pick-up trucks to park overnight in private driveways, provided that they are backed in and the bed is covered. Commissioners rejected the changes and ultimately decided to place it on the ballot.

Many city residents, on both sides of the issue, voiced their disapproval over the commission not voting the measure up or down.

The planned hearing to vote on whether to accept the referendum is scheduled for July 24 but the commission will meet beforehand to craft the language. The questions to be placed on November ballot must be turned in by the end business day on July 24.

CHARTER REVIEW TASK FORCE (CRTF)

On Wednesday, the CRTF met and discussed a host of issues at length. Some of the issues discussed included: BCC salaries and outside employment (the CRTF passed a proposal to include salaries for commissioners equivalent to the median income, garnering 14 votes, the measure will go to the BCC for a hearing); Mayoral Vacancy (CRTF passed an amendment regarding the call for a state of emergency in the absence of the mayor. The amendment will allow an elected official to declare a state of emergency in the following succession: BCC Chair, BCC Vice Chair and Clerk); Mayoral Veto (an amendment was proposed to include an exception for veto, where the mayor cannot veto the BCC's decision on an impasse with unions). The amendment was premised on a state statute that indicates that the legislative body has the final say in such an event; Petition process (discussions ensued regarding the removal of requirements of notarization and circulator). Mayoral authority as Sheriff (It was proposed to have the mayor delegate that authority to the police department director. Language is being created to address the issue). On the issue of Annexation and Incorporation, a proposal passed to create language for an amendment that would eliminate the penalty for annexation, allowing a pro-rata share of franchise fees to go to the municipalities, providing equity among existing and newly created cities.

A discussion on the governance structure of Jackson Health System continued from the last CRTF meeting. JHS Chairman Marcos Lapcuic was present and engaged in the discussion, emphasizing that the governance structure should not change at the expense of funds, sovereignty, transparency or the mission. Lapcuic recommended that the next board should be made up of people based on "what they know and not who they know". He suggested that the board should be limited to no more than 9 people, further indicating that a new permanent board should have total operational autonomy. In order for Jackson to compete, Lapcuic noted that the JHS Board should be "small, quick, and free of conflicts".

THE NEW MIAMI FORUM

On Thursday, The New Miami Forum took up the issue of "The Cities vs. Miami-Dade County". The forum featured speakers: Honorable Juan Carlos Bermudez, Founding Mayor, City of Doral and Honorable Ruth Shack, Miami-Dade Commissioner, 1976-1986. The event was focused on reexamining the relationship between City and County

Government. The forum offered an informational session, which discussed issues of efficiency, economy, transparency and fairness.

PROPERTY APPRAISER

Property Appraiser Pedro J. Garcia issues June 1, 2012 Estimates of Taxable Value:

As prescribed by Florida law, Property Appraiser, Pedro J. Garcia has issued the June 1, 2012 Estimates of Taxable Value to Miami-Dade County's Taxing Authorities, allowing these authorities to proceed with the preparation of their 2012-2013 budgets.

The countywide estimate of taxable value for 2012 is \$189,731,000,000 which is 1.48 percent more than the 2011 figure of \$186,962,023,337. A breakdown of the data by municipality shows that some areas have experienced increases in property values, others have remained statistically flat, and a few have seen values decline, albeit at a slower rate than in previous years.

Please click the link to view the estimated property assessments by municipality:

<http://www.miamidade.gov/pa/library/2012-06-01-estimated-assessment-values.pdf>

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

SAVE THE DATE:

Miami-Dade League of Cities

What: MDCLC Board of Director's meeting

When: Thursday, August 2, 2012

Where: TBA

Time: 6:30 PM – 9:00 PM

LOCAL WEEKLY REPORT

June 11 – June 15, 2012

JACKSON HEALTH SYSTEM

On Thursday, the Financial Recovery Board discussed its third month of financial surpluses for JHS. Chairman Marcos Lapciuc noted that in spite of the reported surplus, JHS remains insolvent and needs “bold moves” to turn itself around.

Although JHS has gained \$8 million over the past three months, Lapciuc noted that the ratio is 62 cents in liquid assets for every dollar owed, which means the JHS remains insolvent. Lapciuc agreed that the recent layoffs of more than 900 employees and other cost cutting measures have helped stabilize the situation; however, he emphasized that there is a long road ahead that JHS must be prepared to deal with.

Lapciuc suggested looking into measures, such as, asking for a \$200-plus million bond issue for next year to provide money to improve equipment and update the aging facility. The idea was pitched as something to think about over the course of the strategic planning retreat scheduled for next Friday.

The board has planned a day-long retreat to map out a future for Jackson. Lapciuc suggested the board prepare a three-year plan and set priorities, including making sure that Jackson remains No. 1 in trauma services, improving information technology, getting a true handle on which services are making money and hammering out a new agreement with the University of Miami medical school.

Additionally on Thursday, the board heard more about the May final report, which showed a surplus of \$1.3 million with 10 days cash in hand. The 10 days cash in hand figure was arrived at by using a different measure than last year and is consequently lower than it would have been otherwise. The new measure does not include \$143 million set aside for an “intergovernmental transfer” that was done on June 1, with that money being sent to Tallahassee, so that a larger sum could be drawn down from federal payments from the Lower Income Pool.

KEY BISCAZYNE

Key Biscayne Mayor Franklin Caplan will get another two-year term in office. The qualifying period for candidates ended last Friday and Caplan was the only one to sign up. This is the second time that Caplan runs unopposed for mayor of the Village. Caplan is a business attorney and former chairman of the village’s zoning ordinance review committee.

In Key Biscayne, mayors serve two-year terms, while council members serve four-year terms. Both mayors and council members cannot be in office for more than eight consecutive years. Those who have served eight years and wish to run again must wait one year prior to running again. Neither mayor nor council members earn a salary for their positions.

This year, three council members' terms are set to expire: Mike Kelly, Robert Gusman and Enrique Garcia. According to Village Clerk Conchita Alvarez, Kelly and Gusman are not seeking a second term.

The qualifying period for council members begins at noon on August 7 and ends at noon on August 17. Elections will take place on November 6 and will be held in conjunction with the federal elections.

MIAMI-DADE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

On Wednesday, the Miami-Dade School Board voted to move forward with a controversial multi-million dollar expansion plan that could triple the enrollment of MAST (Maritime and Science Technology Academy), a premier magnet school.

Currently just over 500 students attend MAST, and the school accepts freshmen who meet very stringent academic requirements.

To the east of MAST Academy lies the Village of Key Biscayne, which has an overcrowded K-8 center and no high school. On Tuesday, the Key Biscayne council came up with a plan to address both issues. The plan was described as follows: renovate the existing Key Biscayne K-8 Center; add a middle school to MAST Academy; and add seats to the MAST Academy high school. Key Biscayne student who qualify for enrollment would be considered first for a percentage of those seats.

The Village of Key Biscayne would pay \$10 million toward the plan, and MDPS would contribute \$12 million over time, for a total cost of \$22 million.

While the plan is embraced by Key Biscayne residents and the MDPS board, many MAST parents are worried that the plan will degrade the academic excellence of the school with the influx of students.

Superintendent Alberto Carvalho expressed his support of the plan, stating that a middle school at MAST Academy may encourage younger students to apply to attend the high school at the academy.

Although the school board gave preliminary approval to the plan, the district must still hash out the details of the expansion, which will occur during the next meeting to be held in July.

If fully approved the new school would be ready in 2015.

CUTLER BAY

On Monday, Cutler Bay council members voted 3-2 to fire Town Manager Steven Alexander, the first and only town manager since its incorporation in 2005.

The motion, made by Mayor Ed MacDougal, authorized nine months of severance pay as required by Alexander's contract. That translated to an estimated \$148,000, plus benefits and a cell phone allowance.

Alexander's dismissal was partly due to certain residents' complaints that he was too powerful and unresponsive to the community.

Mac Dougal, Vice Mayor Ernie Sochin and council member Sue Ellen Loyzelle voted to fire Alexander. Council members Peggy Bell and Mary Ann Mixon, who dissented, indicated that Cutler Bay was in the best condition of all of the towns in Miami-Dade County, due to the manager, and warned against "which hunts". Loyzelle asked that Alexander's termination be labeled "without cause".

The Council agreed to retain for 30 days as a consultant during the process of finding a new manager, with an option for a 30 day renewal. Alexander will receive about \$14,000 for each month he serves as a consultant.

The council unanimously agreed to appoint public works director Ralph Casals as interim town manager effective immediately. Casals has previously served as acting town manager in Alexander's absence.

Additionally, On Wednesday, at a workshop, the town council agreed to fine tune new rules and regulations regarding signs, large in-home gatherings and truck parking.

The changes come as the council gets close to concluding its work on the town's first land development rules since its incorporation in 2005. The town has been using Miami-Dade County's rules in the meantime. The town council is scheduled to vote on the the land development rules on June 20.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

SAVE THE DATE:

Charter Review Task Force

A Public Meeting of the Charter Review Task Force has been scheduled to consider amendments of the Home Rule Charter and other matters that may come before the Task Force.

Date: June 20, 2012 5:00 p.m.
Location: 111 NW 1st Street
Commission Chambers - 2nd Floor
Miami, FL 33128

Miami-Dade League of Cities

What: MDCLC Board of Director's meeting
When: Thursday, August 2, 2012
Where: TBA
Time: 6:30 PM – 9:00 PM

LOCAL WEEKLY REPORT

June 18 – June 22, 2012

MIAMI

On Wednesday, a City of Miami panel was pitched different visions for the waterfront property where Scotty's Landing and Grove Key Marina currently sit. The winning proposal gets a 40-year lease on the landmark waterfront site.

Miami commenced its search for a new tenant over the spring. Its 35-year lease with Grove Key Marina expires this year. City officials have indicated that they want an improvement. Additionally, the city is also seeking a new operator to run an upscale eatery on the site of the Coconut Grove Chart House restaurant.

A selection committee heard presentations from companies interested in the two projects. The panel reconvenes today to deliberate and forward its recommendations to City Manager Johnny Martinez. The city commission will take up the proposal over the summer.

The final decision will be made by the voters, who must approve any waterfront leases by public referendum. Miami officials expect to include the issue in the November ballot.

On Tuesday, the City of Miami Commission called a special meeting to figure out what to do with Jungle Island. Currently, the Watson Island-based theme park is \$2 million short on its federal debt payments. The park's owner indicated that an outside investor is willing to save Jungle Island in exchange for what the city calls "impossible" demands.

Miami Commissioner Michelle Spence-Jones indicated that the city's financial predicament, as well as its responsibility for 80 percent of the loan, demonstrates that the city is involved in a bad deal. If Jungle Island defaults, the city and county will have to make up the \$40 million.

The commission postponed a final decision for a later date.

DORAL

Last week, the Doral City Council unanimously approved an ethics ordinance proposed by Mayor Juan Carlos Bermudez. The ordinance adds to the existing code of ethics to make it more stringent than the standards already set by the state and Miami-Dade County for elected officials, lobbyists, city employees and vendors.

The ordinance requires elected officials in Doral to submit Form 6 of the Florida Commission on Ethics, a financial disclosure document, to the city clerk upon qualifying for office. Additionally, all elected officials must submit Form 6 within 30 days of the effective date of the ordinance and annually by July 1.

Under the ordinance the city manager is required to report to the council regarding employee violations of standards set by the ordinance.

SURFSIDE

Approximately three weeks after Surfside Commissioner Sheldon Lisbon, who was sworn-in in March, submitted his letter of resignation to run for state office (newly created District 100); a controversy erupted. Commissioner Marta Olchyk and some area residents have expressed their disappointment over the resignation prompting a need for another election, costing the town \$20,000.

Lisbon will be running as a democrat and will challenge Representative Joe Gibbons (D-Hallandale Beach) for the new district seat on August 14.

To read more, please click the link:

<http://www.miamiherald.com/2012/06/17/2849959/surfside-leaders-exit-stokes-ire.html>

JACKSON HEALTH SYSTEM

On Tuesday, Jackson Health System was one of 71 organizations to be named as a “Leader in LGBT Healthcare Equality” by the Human Rights Campaign Foundation.

Jackson was one of only three healthcare groups in Florida to be named.

ELECTIONS

MIAMI GARDENS

For the first time since its incorporation, the City of Miami Gardens will hold mayoral elections. Mayor Shirley Gibson, who was the inaugural mayor in 2003 and has held the post since, cannot seek re-election according to the city’s charter.

The Mayoral race has drawn six candidates, who are focused on addressing public safety, fiscal responsibility and economic development.

The Candidates are as follows:

Councilman Andre Williams, who has been critical of money spent by the city, said that he will look closely at funds spent on the city's media and events department.

Williams, 44, a real estate attorney, was the only councilperson to vote in October against the city budget, which increased the tax rate by 11 percent.

Willie Kelly, 66, a retired Army food-service provider, says the city's police department is taking up too much of the general budget. He's in favor of dismantling the city's police department and returning to Miami-Dade County's services.

Darin Woods, 48, a mortgage banker, said he wants to address crime, unemployment, education, and housing for seniors and veterans.

John Pace, 61, a retired police officer, said the city needs to better educate residents about the permitting process and other requirements for homeowners.

Katrina Wilson, 49, a Miami-Dade County schoolteacher, wants to capitalize on the crowds that come to big-ticket events at SunLife Stadium. She also wants to focus on crime reduction and assistance for the elderly.

Tanya James, 38, a fitness director, indicated that she would strive to create a community where businesses, churches and residents can unite.

The Miami Gardens election will take place on August 14. Early voting commences August 4.

Miami-Dade County Property Appraiser

Current Miami-Dade County Property Appraiser Pedro J. Garcia and challenger Carlos Lopez-Cantera engaged in a debate at the Miami Association of Realtors on Thursday night.

The two argued over the departmental operations and budget, property tax value adjustments and a new software system to help identify homestead-exemption fraud.

Thursday's event was one of the first debates between Garcia, 74, who has served one term, and Lopez-Cantera, 38, the Miami Republican whose state house term is up in November.

The event was moderated by former County Commissioner Katy Sorenson, and took place at the Coral Gables offices of the Miami Association of Realtors.

The critical tasks for the property appraiser includes setting the tax roll, which in Miami-Dade reaches approximately \$200 billion, and creating an accessible website where the public can view property sales and taxes. Miami-Dade contains and estimated 90,000

properties. Additional responsibilities include a \$30 million yearly departmental budget and 370 employees.

The election for the property appraiser is to be held every four years. The position includes a \$153,000 yearly salary.

The upcoming election will be held on August 14.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

SAVE THE DATE:

Downtown Bay Forum

Pit Bull Politics / Should the Miami-Dade Breed Specific Legislation Ban Be Lifted or Not?

Speakers: Alex Munoz, Director, Miami-Dade County Animal Services; Dahlia Canes, Director, Miami-Dade Coalition Against Breed Specific Legislation; Timothy W. Ross J.D. Insphere Insurance Solutions, Florida Bar, Animal Law Committee.

When: Wednesday, June 27

Time: 11:30 AM

Where: Wolfson Auditorium @ Temple Isreal, 137 NE 19th St, Miami

RSVP: Annette Eisenberg (305) 757-2015

Miami-Dade League of Cities

What: MDCLC Board of Director's meeting

When: Thursday, August 2, 2012

Where: TBA

Time: 6:30 PM – 9:00 PM

LOCAL WEEKLY REPORT

June 25 – June 29, 2012

MIAMI

On Wednesday, a three judge panel denied former Miami Police Chief Miguel Exposito's attempt to get his job back. Exposito appealed his 2011 firing on a technicality, indicating that he had not disobeyed orders from City Manager Johnny Martinez to hold off on three employees' demotions. His attorneys argued that the employees had been reassigned, not demoted. Additionally, they argued that the city commission had violated its "five day rule" in firing Exposito six day after his suspension.

Circuit Court Judge Valerie Manno Schurr opined that the commission's decision to remove Exposito "was supported by competent substantial evidence." She also found the six day time frame for the firing reasonable, in part because the deliberations had lasted late into the night Friday and needed to be continued on Monday.

Judges Norma Lindsey and Milton Hirsch concurred in the opinion.

Exposito said he was considering his options going forward.

MIAMI BEACH

A two year legal battle over the Miami Beach police and fire pension fund may be closed.

On Wednesday, the Third District Court of Appeal issued an opinion stating that the city does not have to seek voter approval to make changes to its pension fund (the point of contention between City Hall and the fund's board).

Commissioners, following the approval of union contracts, voted in November 2010 to ensure that newly hired officers and firefighters would accrue more modest pensions over longer periods, among other changes. The fund's board declined to change benefits provided by the system on the grounds that state law requires a voter referendum to amend a municipality's pension system.

Instead of seeking voter approval, the city sued. City attorney Jose Smith believes the appellate court opinion, written by Senior Court Judge Alan Schwartz, will end the dispute. However, the board could still opt to appeal to the Florida Supreme Court.

NORTH MIAMI BEACH

The City of North Miami is currently working toward annexing unincorporated areas around its city limits. At a council meeting last week, City Manager Lyndon L. Bonner updated the city council on those efforts. Bonner asked the council to reach out to county officials about amending an ordinance that directs utility-tax revenues accrued in annexed areas to the county instead of the city.

The city hopes to annex several areas in and around the city, in particular and oddly shaped location in the center of the city known as “doughnut holes.” The area extends from NE Sixth Avenue to 15th Avenue and approximately from NW 181st Street to 163rd Street. The city is currently working on a program that will demonstrate the benefits of joining North Miami Beach.

The council will discuss the matter at their next scheduled council meeting on July 3 at 7:30 PM.

NORTH BAY VILLAGE

On Tuesday, Commissioner Dr. Paul Vogel passed away at 84 years of age. He died at North Shore Medical Center of heart failure. Vogel, a veteran of the US Coast Guard and chiropractor, served as mayor of the village from 1982-1998. He also held leadership positions on the Florida Board of Chiropractic Medicine and the Miami Dade County League of Cities.

Vogel is survived by Marietta Kalman Vogel, his wife of 50 years, his daughter Valerie and sons Andrew and Peter.

Funeral Services were held on Thursday at Blasberg Rubin-Zilbert funeral home in Miami Beach, followed by a burial at Lakes Memorial Park in Doral.

SEVEN50 (Seven Counties / 50 Years)

Seven50 held its opening summit on Wednesday, June 27 at the Old School Square in Delray Beach, Fl. The Southeast Florida Regional Partnership and the public participated in the first of a series of summits.

Seven50 (“seven counties, 50 years”) is a blueprint for growing a more prosperous and desirable Southeast Florida over the next 50 years. The plan is being developed with a focus on creating socially inclusive communities, a resilient economy, and stewardship of the fragile ecosystem in what is becoming one of the world’s most important mega-regions.

Spearheaded by the South Florida and Treasure Coast Regional Planning Councils and the Southeast Florida Regional Partnership (SFRP), a unique collaboration of more than 200 public, private, and civic stakeholders, Seven50 is mapping the strategy for the best-possible quality of life for the more than six million residents of Monroe, Miami-Dade, Broward, Palm Beach, Martin, St. Lucie and Indian River counties.

The plan is being devised through a series of public summits, workshops, online outreach and high-impact studies led by the region's top thinkers. Seven50 has been made possible by a grant from the US Department of Housing & Urban Development's Sustainable Communities Initiative.

DOWNTOWN BAY FORUM

On Wednesday, the Downtown Bay Forum held a discussion, which centered on whether or not Miami-Dade Breed Specific Legislation Ban Be Lifted.

Panelists included: Miami-Dade County Commissioner Sally Heyman; Alex Munoz, Director, Miami-Dade County Animal Services; Dahlia Canes, Director, Miami-Dade Coalition Against Breed Specific Legislation; Timothy W. Ross J.D. Insphere Insurance Solutions, Florida Bar, Animal Law Committee.

While no one spoke out against the ban, those who want to lift the ban in Miami-Dade County said its dangerous dog ordinance will be strengthened to crack down on aggressive dogs and their owners.

To read more, please click the link:

<http://www.local10.com/thats-life/Miami-Dade-pit-bull-ban-up-for-vote/-/1716786/15325102/-/cq84oz/-/index.html>

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